

Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 1a – Legal Compliance

Issue 1: Has the Council complied with the duty to co-operate and other relevant procedural and legal requirements in the preparation of the Local Plan.

1.1 In preparing the Plan did the Councils engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations on cross-boundary issues, in respect of the Duty to Co-operate?

Yes. The Councils (hereafter referred to as the CLAs) have fully complied with the requirements as set out in NPPF (2023, including paragraphs 24 to 27) and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 33A onwards).

The CLAs have engaged with Lancashire County Council (hereafter referred to as LCC) and other prescribed bodies, on strategic (and non-strategic) matters from the outset and throughout this plan making process. The relevant bodies the CLAs have engaged with include the Local Nature Partnership, the Marine Management Organisation, County Council (Lancashire), infrastructure providers (including Environment Agency, Historic England, Integrated Transport Authority and Highways Authority, United Utilities, Electricity North West, Civil Aviation Authority), and the combined authority (there are no elected mayors).

The engagement carried out at each stage of plan making has been integral to the production of this positively prepared and justified strategy, full details of which, are set out in the Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement ([CD09a](#)). The Duty to Cooperate Statement ([DC01](#)) provides specific information setting out how the CLAs have complied with this requirement including identifying where additional infrastructure is necessary (such as transport and school places). Matters of collaboration have been identified with our partners and strategic plan policies aligned to ensure a consistent approach to the planning of major infrastructure, that development needs are provided for, and, to ensure any cross-boundary allocations or designations are appropriately managed.

The CLAs have also prepared statements of common ground with key bodies and delivery partner organisations (listed in paragraphs 1.6 of [CD09a](#) and 1.6 and 1.7 of [DC01](#) respectively).

- What engagement with neighbouring authorities has taken place as to the scale and form of development proposed and any strategic matters arising from this? What are the cross-boundary issues relating to economic growth and employment land provision? What was the outcome?

Effective engagement has taken place with neighbouring authorities throughout plan making, including consultation at each stage of plan making (Regulation 18 and 19) on the scope of the CLLP, including the scale and form of development planned. This is set out in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement ([CD09a](#)) and the Duty to Cooperate Statement ([DC01](#)). Regular engagement comprising of a mix of face-to-face meetings, Teams meetings, telephone conversations and email correspondence has taken place with all neighbouring authorities which include Bolton Council, Wigan Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, Manchester Combined Authority, Fylde Borough Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council and LCC.

The strategic matters arising from this are set out below. A consistent approach has been taken with regards to the planning of major infrastructure including transport, schools, utilities and health. LCC as the upper tier authority with strategic responsibility for a variety of functions including transport, public health, flood risk, and education, have played a key role in the preparation of the plan generally, and specifically in respect of evidence needed to identify the infrastructure necessary to support the scale of development planned. This evidence has been relied on in the preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan ([ID08](#)).

In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 11b, strategic policies provide for meeting objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses in full therefore none of the neighbouring authorities have been requested to accept unmet need arising from any of the three CLAs. In addition, there are no unmet development needs from neighbouring authorities to be provided for (and no such requests were made by neighbouring authorities during the plan making process).

The cross-boundary engagement relating to economic growth and employment land provision has included the consideration of representations from LCC and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council raising a concern that the local plan allocates insufficient land to meet employment need for the plan period.

It should be noted that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is the landowner / promoter of a proposal for a strategic allocation for development in the Green Belt across the boundary of Blackburn and South Ribble. Its representation concerns that proposal. The site in question is an omission site, the CLAs do not consider that it is required to meet identified development needs, and it has not been proposed for allocation in the CLLP.

The outcome of this engagement, evidenced in the SoCG (CLA01) is that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council agree upon the basis of the published CLLP evidence base,

there is no unmet need arising between them and the CLAs in either direction. It is an area of disagreement that the CLLPs provision for employment land will meet the full employment needs of the Plan area.

The CLAs have worked closely with LCC on ensuring that the CLLP offers sufficient opportunity for growth over the plan period and LCC had requested the CLAs maintain existing strategic allocations and consider the allocation of new strategic employment sites, taking into account the lead in time for preparing new strategic sites for development. As the SoCG shows (CLA01), the CLAs considered that approach and concluded it is not appropriate given the available supply of employment land and the principles of the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Objective 2, to support growth in the existing main urban areas to regenerate the City and Town centres and make the best use of existing land.

The outcome of the engagement with LCC is that it is agreed that the proposed allocations in the CLLP are aligned to the identified OAN and to the strategic objectives within the CLLP not least the regeneration of Preston and use of existing brownfield land.

It is also agreed that the CLLP allocates more than sufficient employment sites for the plan period and that those allocations support the key objective of the regeneration of our city and town centres. The CLAs continue to work in partnership with LCC on delivering the transformational schemes noted within the Lancashire Growth Plan at Preston Station Quarter and at Salmesbury Enterprise Zone.

LCC and the CLAs will continue to monitor the take-up of employment opportunities at the Enterprise Zone in Salmesbury and future demand from specialised businesses looking to co-locate with existing businesses in the area and are committed to working with the CLAs to ensure the timely preparation of evidence for the next local plan.

If monitoring indicates the Enterprise Zone in Salmesbury will reach capacity early in the plan period, the CLAs will explore mechanisms to address supply as referenced in the answer to 1.11.

- Are there any strategic cross-boundary issues in relation to any of the proposed site allocations and any general policies, and if so, how have they been considered via the Duty to Co-operate?

No. The Councils have engaged with neighbouring authorities at Regulation 18 and 19 of plan making, and in addition, have held more detailed discussions with authorities where proposed allocations lie close to or adjacent to district boundaries. No objections have been raised to proposed allocations or general policies in the plan in relation to strategic cross boundary issues.

1.2 Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme (CD12)?

Yes. The CLLP has been prepared in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme (CD12), with timescales adhered to for each stage and this document has been kept updated throughout the plan making process.

1.3 Has consultation on the plan been carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the requirements of the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations?

Yes. The Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) for each Council (RD06, RD07 and RD08) have each been subject to a review during the course of plan making to ensure any consultation process set out in the LDS accords with the adopted SCIs for each of the CLAs. Each consultation phase has therefore been undertaken in line with the requirements set out in each Council's SCI and there has been consistency across the three boroughs in terms of consultation methods, timings and public communication of the consultation. The CLAs have timed formal decision making at each stage of plan to ensure alignment.

The consultation methodology fully complies with the requirements of the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations. The LDS clearly sets out the processes and timings expected for engagement at each stage of plan making on page 10 and 11 with reference to the relevant Regulations (Issues and Options and Preferred Options Regulation 18, Publication of Pre-submission Version Regulation 19 and Submission Stage Regulation 22).

The requirements of S22(1)(c) are included in the Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (CD09A). For ease, the page numbers are provided below for each required element:

- (i) the bodies and persons the local planning authority invited to make representations under regulation 18, see Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (CD09A) section 2.1.4 (page 2). For further detailed information, this is also available in the Duty to Cooperate Statement (DC01) within Table 1 Details of Engagement with prescribed bodies (pages 9 to 12) and Section 7; Collaboration with Other Organisations (page 13).

Further detailed information about those who were consulted is also available in Central Lancashire Local Plan Consultations Issues and (CD09b) section 3.2, 3.3 and supplementary [Appendix 1](#), and Central Lancashire Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Statement (page 5) (CD09c).

- (ii) how those bodies and persons were invited to make representations under regulation 18, see Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (CD09A) sections 2.2.5 – 2.2.9 (pages 5 to 6 of CD09a)
- (iii) a summary of the main issues raised by the representations made pursuant to regulation 18 - see Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (CD09A) section 2.2.11 (pages 8-11 CD09a)
- (iv) how any representations made pursuant to regulation 18 have been taken into account; see Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (CD09A) section 2.2.12 (page 1 CD09a 1).

For further detailed information see the Duty to Cooperate Statement (DC01) within Table 1 Details of Engagement with prescribed bodies (pages 9 to 12) and Central Lancashire Local Plan Consultations Issues and Options (CD09b) page 5 onwards.

- (v) if representations were made pursuant to regulation 20, the number of representations made, and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations; see Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 22 Consultation Statement sections 3.4.16 to 3.4.17 (pages 17 to 18 CD09a)
- (vi) and if no representations were made in regulation 20, that no such representations were made - not applicable as representations were made.

1.4 Does the Integrated Assessment (IA) provide a comprehensive and robust basis to inform the strategy and contents of the Plan, particularly in terms of:

(a) Its assessment of the likely effects of the plan's policies and allocations?

Yes, the IA ([CD05](#)) robustly and comprehensively assesses the likely effects of the CLLPs policies and allocations, and has informed the strategy and contents of the CLLP. The methodology, set out in Chapter 2 of the IA, is based on current good practice and PPG ([Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal section](#)). It has been carried out as an integral part of the plan-making process.

Under Stage A of the IA, an IA Framework was developed, taking into account the findings of the IA Scoping Report. It contains 18 sustainability objectives and supporting assessment criteria, against which the likely sustainability effects of the policies and proposals with the CLLP have been transparently and consistently described, analysed and compared.

Each strategic option, draft policy and site option was assessed against each IA objective. The findings for each objective are presented as colour coded symbols showing the effect, as set out in Table 2.2 of the IA.

Chapter 4 sets out the IA of the strategic options relating to the housing quantum, employment quantum and spatial strategy which helped to inform the approach taken in the CLLP in relation to these matters.

Chapter 5 sets out the IA of the likely effects of the site options being considered under Stage 2 of the SHELAA. These findings formed part of the site selection assessment work under the SHELAA and therefore helped inform the selection of housing, employment and mixed-use allocations in the CLLP.

Chapter 6 sets out the IA of the likely effects of the vision, objectives, and each individual policy within the draft Regulation 19 CLLP. Amendments were made to some of the policies in the Submission CLLP in response to the recommendations in the IA.

(b) Its consideration of reasonable alternatives, including the development quantum and spatial distribution options? Does it capture all reasonable alternative site options put forward in the Plan preparation process? Can these be compared on a like for like basis?

Yes, the IA provides a robust and comprehensive assessment of all reasonable alternatives for the development quantum and spatial distribution options which has informed the strategy of the CLLP.

The housing quantum options are based on five scenarios for assessing local housing need as identified in the Central Lancashire Housing Study Update ([HO09](#)). The only option identified for the employment quantum is the need identified in the Central Lancashire Employment Land Study – Land Supply and OAN Update 2024 Final Report ([ER06a](#)). This provides a robust assessment of employment need in Central Lancashire and as such it was considered that there were no other reasonable alternatives. For the spatial strategy, five options were identified, these are considered to represent all reasonable alternatives. Each option was assessed against the IA Framework to identify its likely effects.

The IA captures all reasonable site options considered in the plan preparation process. The SHELAA ([HO14a](#)) sets out the methodology for assessing potential housing and employment sites. The sites submitted to the CLAs, or identified by the CLAs, under Stage 1a) of the SHELAA were subject to an initial assessment under Stage 1(b) of the SHELAA. The SHELAA identifies the specific constraints that resulted in a site being discounted at this stage. These were considered to be absolute constraints and sites entirely affected by one or more of the identified constraints were therefore determined not to be suitable for development and not a reasonable alternative for the purposes of the IA. The remaining sites were subject to a more detailed assessment under Stage 2 of the SHELAA, including the IA, which informed the selection of site allocations.

It is considered that the development quantum and spatial distribution options can be compared on a like for like basis. The site options have been assessed based on their proposed use, therefore the sites that were considered for housing allocation can be

compared on a like for like basis, and so can the employment sites that were considered for allocation. A set of criteria was developed and applied during the IA of the site options, to ensure consistency in the appraisal of a large number of alternative site options. These criteria are set out in Appendix C of the IA and comprise clear parameters for identifying likely effects (i.e. significant or minor, positive or negative) for each site option in relation to each of the IA objectives.

(c) Its explanation of why the preferred strategy and policies were selected?

Yes. The IA includes an assessment of the different options considered for the housing quantum, employment quantum and spatial strategy. It also provides a summary of these assessments along with a comparison of how the options performed against the IA Framework. These assessments, alongside other CLLP evidence documents, informed the selection of the preferred option/strategy. The IA then identifies the CLAs preferred option/approach and the reasons for this.

For site options, all sites taken forward to Stage 2 of the SHELAA were considered reasonable options and they were all assessed on an equal basis. The IA formed part of the site selection process and therefore helped to inform the selection of sites, but a range of other assessments were also undertaken through the SHELAA to assess the suitability of sites for development. All sites identified as being suitable, available and achievable in the SHELAA and which conformed with the spatial strategy were selected for allocation. Appendix D in the IA report sets out the CLAs reasons for selecting or rejecting each site option that had been appraised.

The development of individual policies has been iterative and they have been amended, where necessary, in response to the recommendations within the IA.

(d) Its assessment of the amount of development that would arise as a result of the provisions in the Plan?

Yes, the IA robustly assesses the amount of development that would arise as a result of the policies and site allocations within the CLLP. Policies are assessed both individually and cumulatively.

This has been assessed through the IA that has considered the likely effects of the housing and employment quantum options in Chapter 4 (and which informed the strategy in the CLLP). The IA also includes an assessment of all the individual CLLP policies in Chapter 6, including the following which propose development:

- SS3 to SS6: Strategic Site Allocations
- HS1: Scale of Housing Growth and Distribution
- HS2 to HS4: Housing allocations
- HS13: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Needs
- EC2: Scale of Economic Growth
- EC2 to EC4: Employment allocations

- EC5 and EC6: Mixed use allocations

Chapter 7 sets out an assessment of the cumulative effects of the pre-submission CLLP. It presents the total effects of all the policies and then includes a discussion on the likely cumulative and synergistic effects of the CLLP on each IA objective, as well as on geographical areas and the potential for cumulative effects for neighbouring authorities plans.

1.5 Is the Habitats Regulations Assessment adequate and does the Plan include all the recommendations identified in the assessment as necessary to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations? Is it robust and convincing in its conclusion that the Plan will have no significant effects on the integrity of any European sites?

Yes – the HRA is adequate, and the Plan includes all the recommendations identified in the assessment as necessary to ensure compliance with the Habitat Regulations. It is robust and convincing that the Plan will have no significant effects on the integrity of any European sites.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Central Lancashire Local Plan has been carried out by LUC on behalf of the Central Lancashire Authorities. The HRA Report ([CD07](#)) that was submitted with the CLLP was prepared by LUC in January 2025 and had been published for consultation alongside the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan.

The HRA has been undertaken in accordance with the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) and takes into account the implications of recent relevant case law including most notably the ‘People over Wind’ and ‘Holohan’ rulings from the Court of Justice for the European Union (CJEU).

The HRA Report for the Pre-Submission Local Plan concluded at the Screening stage that likely significant effects could not be ruled out in relation to:

- **Physical damage and/or loss of functionally linked land** – in relation to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site and Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar site.
- **Noise, vibration and lighting disturbance of functionally linked land** – in relation to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site and Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA.
- **Impacts of recreation** – in relation to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site, Sefton Coast SAC, and Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA, Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar site.
- **Water quality – direct pollution** – in relation to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site, and Martin Mere SPA / Ramsar site.

Therefore, Appropriate Assessment was carried out in relation to these potential likely significant effects, as reported in Chapter 5 of the January 2025 HRA Report ([CD07](#)). The Appropriate Assessment at that stage concluded that most of the likely significant effects identified at the Screening stage would not result in adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats Sites within 15km of Central Lancashire due to either existing policy safeguards in the Regulation 19 Local Plan, or as a result of further mitigation measures that the HRA had recommended be included in the Local Plan policies. These recommendations are detailed in Chapter 5 of the HRA Report (Appropriate Assessment) and relate to functionally linked land. The changes to policy wording that were made in response to these are set out in the table below. LUC was satisfied that these changes provided the safeguards required to conclude ‘no adverse effects on integrity’ in relation to physical damage and loss of functionally linked land and noise, vibration and lighting disturbance of functionally linked land.

However, in January 2025, it was not yet possible to rule out adverse effects on integrity in relation to recreation pressure for the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA, Morecambe Bay Ramsar and Morecambe Bay SAC and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site. The January 2025 HRA report advised that the Councils would need to work with neighbouring authorities and Natural England to help establish Zones of Influence (ZOIs) for these Habitats Sites to determine whether development within the Local Plan could adversely affect the Habitats Sites. If this is the case, then the HRA noted that the Central Lancashire Authorities would also need to make a commitment to joining with any strategic mitigation approach that might be identified (e.g. seeking developer contributions from residential proposals within the ZOI).

Following the Regulation 19 consultation, further discussions took place with Natural England, and the outcomes of these discussions were captured in the Statement of Common Ground ([CLA02](#)). The SOCG confirms that Natural England agreed there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any Habitats Sites, due to the Local Plan. As detailed in the Statement of Common Ground, the following points were agreed in relation to recreation pressure:

- Morecambe Bay Habitats Sites: a commitment is made by the Central Lancashire Authorities to work with neighbouring authorities (Lancaster, Wyre and Westmoreland & Furness, who are leading on strategic recreation mitigation for Morecambe Bay) in the Local Plan, via a policy hook such as that suggested in Natural England’s Regulation 19 consultation response letter, will be sufficient to avoid adverse effects on the Morecambe Bay Habitats Sites (Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA, Morecambe Bay Ramsar and Morecambe Bay SAC).
- Sefton Coast Habitats Sites: it is agreed participation in the Liverpool City Region strategic recreation mitigation strategy is not required. Natural England are not concerned about in combination effects on the Sefton Coast Habitats Sites from the CLA Local Plan and consider existing safeguards to be sufficient.

- General advice: reference in the Regulation 19 consultation response letter to Natural England’s support for new open space / green infrastructure and enhanced provision e.g. for dog walking is intended to be good practice rather than ‘mitigation’ for impacts on specific Habitats Sites.

Natural England agreed that with the suggested ‘policy hook’ in the Local Plan it will be possible for the HRA to conclude ‘no adverse effects on integrity’ for all Habitats Sites. The next iteration of the HRA, expected to be at the Main Modifications stage, will reflect the agreement on recreation pressure and any changes made to policies and will also reflect Natural England’s recommendation that Liverpool Bay SPA can be screened out of the assessment.

Therefore, the HRA is robust and adequate in its conclusions.

Table 1: HRA recommendations on functionally linked habitats and how they have been addressed in the plan

Policy Recommended to be Amended	Recommended Change (LUC)	Amendment to CLLP (as proposed by the CLAs)	Action taken by CLAs
Allocation Policies (SS3, SS5, SS6, HS2, HS3, HS4, EC2, EC3, EC5 and EC6)	Policies need to require wintering bird surveys for particular allocations with reference to the allocation’s individual and cumulative importance for these species	<p>Suggest that the requirement for a wintering bird survey is set out in Policy EN7 (see next row) with cross reference to that policy, and the specific sites that require them identified, in the relevant allocations policies.</p> <p>For the strategic site policies – add a row to the key development considerations table titled ‘Designated Sites for Nature Conservation (EN7)’ and add the following wording: <i>“To provide certainty that the loss of functionally linked land within the site allocation will not adversely affect the integrity of SPA and Ramsar sites, a wintering bird survey is required in accordance with Policy EN7.”</i></p> <p>For the housing/employment/mixed use allocations – add a symbol after the relevant sites and add the following wording to the end of the relevant policy: <i>“For allocations identified by a #, wintering bird surveys are required in accordance with Policy EN7 to provide certainty that the loss of functionally linked land within the site allocation will not adversely affect the integrity of SPA and Ramsar sites.”</i></p> <p>If there are detailed site considerations for the allocation in appendices 4-6, add a row titled ‘Designated Sites for Nature Conservation (EN7)’ and add the following wording: <i>“To provide certainty that the loss of functionally linked land within the site allocation will not adversely affect the integrity of SPA and Ramsar sites, a wintering bird survey is required in accordance with Policy EN7.”</i></p>	<p>Policy EN7(5) sets out a requirement for wintering bird surveys.</p> <p>Strategic site policies, and site allocations and their accompanying KDCs identify which sites require wintering bird surveys in accordance with Policy EN7.</p> <p>This information shall be provided through planning applications. Additional information is provided through paragraphs 7.45 and 7.46 of the supporting text.</p>

Policy Recommended to be Amended	Recommended Change (LUC)	Amendment to CLLP (as proposed by the CLAs)	Action taken by CLAs
EN7	Commitment to undertaking bird surveys and mitigation dependent on the findings of the bird surveys is required.	Add the following wording to the policy: <i>“Wintering bird surveys may be required to support development proposals in order to provide certainty that the loss of functionally linked land will not adversely affect the integrity of the Ramsar Sites and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) identified above. The wintering bird surveys should determine a site’s individual and cumulative importance for relevant bird species and inform mitigation proposals.”</i> Add wording to the justification setting out the bird species that need to be included in the survey.	Proposed wording is included as EN7(5) and within the justification text at paragraphs 7.45 and 7.46. A table is also provided below 7.46 setting out the habitats, qualifying bird species and buffer distances which shall apply.
EN7	Include reference to the following habitat sites located outside of the Central Lancashire boundary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA • Morecambe Bay Ramsar Site • Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar Site 	Not considered necessary to list these three sites in the policy. The policy states that all habitat sites will be protected and just lists those within Central Lancs. They have been listed in the justification.	A table is provided below CLLP paragraph 7.46 setting out the habitats, qualifying bird species and buffer distances which shall apply.
EN14	All site allocations are required to demonstrate the provision of suitable best practice construction measures, including detailed site-specific working methods and sensitive timings of work through a Construction Environmental Management Plan to provide certainty that noise, vibration and lighting disturbance will not adversely affect the integrity of the relevant SPA/Ramsar Site.	Policy EN14 addresses these matters and the justification states that CEMPs may be required for some major applications. Therefore, suggest that the following wording is added to the policy: <i>“A Construction Environmental Management Plan is required for all strategic sites and all housing, employment and mixed use allocations (where planning permission has not already been granted). It may also be required for other developments to ensure that they will not have a detrimental impact on the environment through the creation of noise, vibration, dust or lighting disturbance.”</i>	Policy EN14(3) sets out requirements for CEMPs to be submitted with a planning application. <i>“3. A Construction Environmental Management Plan is required alongside any planning application for development on a strategic site or on a housing, employment or mixed use allocation. It is also required for some developments on non-allocated sites to ensure that they will not have a detrimental impact on the environment through the creation of noise, vibration, dust or lighting disturbance”</i>

In terms of how cumulative effects will be addressed on a site-by-site basis, there are no in-combination effects to consider from recreation pressure, air quality or water quality/quantity. In relation to functionally linked habitats, the Regulation 19 HRA report noted that the commitment to mitigation required within the Local Plan (dependent on the findings of bird surveys) will need to take into account the cumulative numbers of

SPA and Ramsar site birds affected within the relevant site allocations as they come forward for development. It also stated that, in the unlikely but possible event that cumulative numbers of SPA and Ramsar site birds affected are likely to exceed thresholds of significance (i.e. >1% of the associated Habitats Site), appropriate mitigation in the form of habitat creation and management in perpetuity, either on-site or through provision of strategic sites for these species elsewhere within Central Lancashire, will be required.

If required, mitigation will need to create and manage suitably located habitat which maximises feeding productivity for these SPA/Ramsar species, and such mitigatory habitat would need to be provided and be fully functional prior to development which would affect significant numbers of SPA and Ramsar site birds. Due to the common and widespread nature of the habitats present it is considered with certainty that mitigation can be easily achieved through the creation of alternative habitat of equal or greater value should a significant number of qualifying birds be found to utilise habitats within the relevant site allocations. This approach has been approved at recent Examination in Public for other coastal Local Authorities, including North Essex Authorities. There is flexibility in how the mitigation can be applied. The threshold for significance with bird populations is typically considered to be 1% of the relevant SPA/Ramsar's population of a given species. If an individual site is found to support 1% or more of a qualifying bird species, the developer could provide their own mitigation (e.g. enhanced / compensatory habitat) or they could make a developer contribution to fund mitigation locally elsewhere. The mitigation would need to be in place before development occurs that would affect (e.g. through habitat loss) a significant number of SPA/Ramsar birds.

If an individual site is found to support qualifying bird species but the numbers are below the 1% threshold, then no specific mitigation is required. If/when the 1% threshold is projected to be exceeded cumulatively, then mitigation would be required. Responsibility for funding and delivering the mitigation would need to be agreed with Natural England; and monitoring the cumulative survey results should enable this agreement to take place when it looks as though the 1% could be exceeded – i.e. before the need arises.

It should be emphasised that the assessment is precautionary and the requirement for mitigation is unlikely. However, safeguards could be put in place in case they are needed, for example if the Inspectors consider it appropriate, the CLAs could monitor over-wintering bird surveys submitted with planning applications and this requirement could be incorporated into the Monitoring Framework.

The precautionary principle means that it would need to be assumed that different individual birds are using different sites, i.e. the in-combination impact would be calculated by adding up the numbers of a species estimated through survey to be using each site and determining whether that total exceeds 1% of the SPA/Ramsar population.

As the type of habitat affected (largely farmed land) can be created or enhanced for the qualifying bird species with a high degree of certainty, the mitigation proposed is more flexible than mitigation strategies applied to rarer/more complex habitats, elsewhere. Having said that, it is a well-established and accepted approach; and has been used and found sound at Examination, for example by the North Essex authorities. The [Examiners report](#) from the North Essex JSP Examination acknowledges that the proposed approach is reasonable and allows adverse effects on integrity to be avoided (paras. 52 & 53).

1.6 Does the Plan include policies to address the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in Central Lancashire? How are these identified in the Plan?

Yes. Chapter 2 sets out the area's profile, including its opportunities and challenges. Chapter 3 sets out the CLLP's vision and strategic objectives which are supported by the plan's policies, enabling the Councils to meet their strategic priorities for the development and use of land.

1.7 Does the Plan include policies designed to ensure that the development and use of land in Lancashire contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change?

Yes, the Plan contains several policies which aim to ensure that new development and the use of land in the CLLP area contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, with Chapter 8 of the Plan focusing on this.

Policy CC1 is a strategic policy that establishes criteria aimed at mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, including the requirement for major developments to include an Energy Statement and Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment. Policy CC2 revolves around renewable energy generation and district heating networks, and Policy CC3 seeks to ensure a reduction of energy consumption in new development.

Policy HS6 includes a section on densities, which seeks to promote the effective use of land whilst ensuring no detrimental impact on the environmental quality of the surrounding area.

Policy HC1 aims to encourage development to consider the local food environment, including the integration of community food growing which will contribute towards the lowering of transport related climate change.

Policy ST2 ensures that development should contribute towards the delivery of a sustainable transport network that prioritises walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport and reduces the reliance on private motor vehicles. Supplementing this policy is part 7 of CC3 which seeks to create a network of public and private electric vehicle charging facilities across the Plan area.

Many of the policies within Chapter 7: High Quality Environment revolve around seeking to ensure that the natural environment is protected and adaptation and mitigation to climate change is achieved. Policy EN11 specifically supports the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) aimed to reduce flood risk impacts; flood support is a major climate change adaptation.

1.8 How have issues of equality been addressed in the Local Plan?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken as part of the IA for the plan. IA objectives 4 and 5 specifically address issues of equality and the findings of the assessment is reported in CD05, with the plan overall being noted to impact positively on equality issues.

In addition, Preston Council also undertook targeted engagement with ethnic minority groups in their area at Regulation 18 and 19. This was in the form of in person meetings with representatives of the community. The information from the sessions has directly influenced the development of the evidence base for housing and the drafting of policies, specifically policies HS12, HC4 and HC7.

1.9 Does the Plan comply with all other relevant legal requirements, including in the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations?

Yes, the plan has been prepared in accordance with the PCPA 2004 and the 2012 Regulations.

1.10 Does the Policies Map (CD02) correctly illustrate geographically the application of policies of the Plan?

Yes, subject to the proposed minor amendments as set out within [CD04](#) the 'Proposed Schedule of Minor Amendments to the Publication Version of the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023 – 2041 (Policies Map)'.

Matter 1b - Overarching Matters

1.11 Is the Plan period (2023 - 2041) justified, effective and consistent with national policy which requires strategic policies to look at least 15 years ahead from adoption? Should the requirements/timescales for review of the Plan be set out in policy?

Is the Plan period (2023 - 2041) justified, effective and consistent with national policy which requires strategic policies to look at least 15 years ahead from adoption?

Yes, the CLLP period is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The milestones within the Local Development Scheme timetable have been met and an adoption date during the late summer/autumn of 2026, as anticipated by the timetable, is considered achievable. The CLLP will therefore project forward for development needs and provide strategic policies that look ahead for 15-years from the date of adoption between the years 2026/2027 to 2040/2041. It should be noted that the CLLP includes a site (policy SS5) where a significant amount of development is expected to be delivered beyond the CLLP period.

While the period between adoption and the end date of 2025, may be construed as falling slightly short of the 15 years referred to in the NPPF (by up to a maximum of 6 months), this is not considered to be inconsistent with national policy. The NPPF (2023), states “Strategic Policies should look ahead over a minimum of 15 years from adoption” (paragraph 22), this is not a legal or national policy requirement. A recent example of a flexible approach to the plan period is set out in the Inspector’s post Hearing Letter to Chichester Council (CLA11) (Date 15th January 2025, paragraphs 16 to 19) which concluded that “it is acceptable for the strategic policies not to look ahead 15 years from adoption”. It is therefore considered that the Plan period is consistent with national policy.

The CLLP period is supported by a robust the evidence base which projects the need for development over the period between 2023 to 2041. The CLLP provides strategic policies to meet these needs over that period. The Councils consider that ensuring an up-to-date CLLP (including the strategic policies proposed) is adopted as soon as possible, will be effective at meeting the identified needs over the CLLP period. It will provide certainty in progressing the strategic allocations, provide a boost to housing land supply and a framework of policies consistent with the NPPF. The CLLP period is therefore considered justified based on the evidence and to ensure an up-to-date CLLP is in place as soon as possible.

Should the requirements/timescales for review of the Plan be set out in policy?

The CLLP provides for 80% of the local housing need calculated using the standard methodology published in the NPPF (2024). Where the 80% target is met, the transitional arrangements set out at Annex 1 of the NPPF (2024), do not expect an early review. The effectiveness of the CLLP will however be monitored in accordance with the

Monitoring Framework. This will include monitoring of the delivery of housing and employment sites, including long-term strategic employment delivery. Should this monitoring indicate that targets not being met or identify a shortfall in employment land, the CLAs will consider appropriate mechanisms to address these issues, including Housing Delivery Test Action Plans and the potential for use of Supplementary Plans as referred to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, alongside whether a review is necessary.

Local government reorganisation is currently expected to progress across Lancashire with completion by April 2028. It is therefore important that an up-to-date CLLP is in place for this transitional period. Once the unitary councils are established, it is expected that new Plans will be progressed quickly in accordance with the emerging local plan process and the requirement for a new local plan to be adopted within five years of a unitary authority's vesting date (PPG Paragraph: 074 Reference ID: 61-074-20190723). However, at present there is uncertainty surrounding the makeup of the new unitary councils. A single Central Lancashire Local Plan may not be the appropriate option for the new unitary councils. While new local plans will be prepared early in the CLLP period, given the uncertainty surrounding local government reorganisation, the CLAs do not consider it appropriate to set out the requirements/timescales for review of the CLLP in policy.

1.12 What are the implications of the transitional arrangements set out in paras 234 and 235 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) for the examination of the Plan?

The Plan reached Regulation 19 (pre-publication stage) on Monday 24th February 2025. The Plan, the associated submission documents and a statement of the representation procedure were published on this date and the appropriate bodies consulted. The draft housing requirement meets 80% of local housing need calculated using the standard method in national planning practice guidance, published on 12th December 2024.

The circumstances above accord with those set out in paragraph 234a of Annex 1 of the NPPF (2024). As set out in paragraph 235, the Plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of the Framework (NPPF December 2023).

1.13 How have made and emerging Neighbourhood Plans been taken into account and where is this evident?

Made and emerging Neighbourhood Plans have been considered by the CLAs (in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance ([Plan Making](#), Paragraph: 006 (Reference ID: 61-006-20190723)), as set out below.

The CLAs have proactively worked with the Neighbourhood Plan qualifying bodies in designated Neighbourhood Areas where plans have been made or are in preparation/review. Through meeting with these bodies, information has been shared on the development of the new Local Plan from Regulation 18 through to submission,

and how the CLLP may impact on existing or emerging plans has been discussed. In most cases the bodies preparing the plan are also the Parish Council, as such they are a statutory consultee through the plan making process and therefore have had opportunity to comment on any matters relating to a Neighbourhood Plan and the CLLP. The exception to this is the Inner East Preston Neighbourhood Plan which does not reflect parish or ward boundaries. PCC attend meetings with the Friends of Fishwick, who are the lead body behind the preparation of this plan and have updated them on the development of the Local Plan. All bodies are content that the CLLP takes account of relevant policies and any allocations within the made Neighbourhood Plans. The position of each Neighbourhood Plan by authority area is discussed below.

Preston

In Preston, there are four made plans, but only one (Broughton) contains housing allocations different to the Local Plan, all of which have either been built out or are no longer supported by the parish council in their Neighbourhood Plan review work.

Policy requirements within each of the Made Neighbourhoods are reflected within the CLLP and there are not considered to be any policy gaps. Specific requirements that have been met are in relation to the Barton Neighbourhood Plan which includes a Policy on Areas of Separation. Policy BNP06 has allocated new areas of separation (AoS) not within the extant plan (The Preston Local Plan and Central Lancashire Core Strategy). The areas of land allocated through the Barton Neighbourhood Plan through Policy BNP06 as AoS have been reflected within the AoS Policy contained within the CLLP.

The Broughton Neighbourhood Plan is currently in Review and is at Regulation 14 Stage. PCC have been working closely with the Parish Council in updating this plan and have made representations to the Parish Council on the need for this plan to accord with the Draft CLLP.

The Woodplumpton and Broughton Neighbourhood Plans also include the existing area known as North West Preston (Policy MD2 of the Preston Local Plan) within their boundaries, which now forms part of Policy SS3 North West Preston and Bartle in the CLLP. The level of housing proposed through these existing allocations and permissions is acknowledged in both Neighbourhood Plans, with Woodplumpton noting the role these developments play in their area and the level of housing provided within these developments, the continuation of the allocation of North West Preston through Policy SS3 continues to support housing delivery in this area. The Neighbourhood Plans note the potential beneficial aspects of increased community facilities which are proposed as part the schemes in North West Preston and Bartle, Policy SS3 also continues to support the delivery of these. The Woodplumpton Neighbourhood Plan has an end date of 2026, in line with the extant Preston Local Plan and includes a section on triggers for review which include the review of the Local Plan.

Both Plans have policies to protect the rural setting of the settlements. Whilst these policies may now be considered out of date due to changes in national policy, both

Neighbourhood Plan groups have supported the policies in Chapter 7 of the CLLP which seek to ensure protection of the environment

Whilst the Barton Neighbourhood Plan was also made fairly recently (Dec 2023), this also includes a review mechanism to consider the need to update full or part of the plan to ensure it conforms with the Local Plan in both Wyre and Preston.

The Inner East Preston is the oldest Neighbourhood Plan within the Preston area, having been Made in April 2015. This plan references 2 allocations for employment land which are sites in existing employment use. Whilst Part of the Maitland Mill site (LEES2) has since been granted permission for housing and is currently under construction, the remaining employment uses remain extant here and at LEES1. These areas are protected by Policy EC7. Currently there are no plans to review this document by the community.

There is currently no appetite to progress with the development of the Grimsargh Neighbourhood Plan by the Qualifying Body.

There are not considered to be any conflicts with the Made Neighbourhood Plans and the CLLP. Whilst the Broughton Neighbourhood Plan is currently at Regulation 14 stage, the Parish are aware of the need to ensure this plan accords with the CLLP and references the policies within the CLLP as submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2025.

Chorley

There are no made Neighbourhood Plans in Chorley. There are three designated Neighbourhood Areas within the borough of Chorley: Coppull, Bretherton, and Mawdesley. All three are currently drafting their Neighbourhood Plans and are at different stages. It is expected that both Coppull and Bretherton Parish Councils will submit their plans for independent examination in 2026. Work on the Mawdesley Neighbourhood Plan is still in an initial draft stage.

Chorley Council has proactively worked with all three of the Parish Councils and it is considered that the draft Coppull and Bretherton Neighbourhood Plans are in conformity with the CLLP and do not contain allocated land which conflicts with the CLLP. Chorley Council has not yet seen a draft version of the Mawdesley Neighbourhood Plan.

South Ribble

South Ribble has one adopted Neighbourhood Plan (NP): the [Penwortham Neighbourhood Development Plan \(2016-2026\)](#), adopted 2017. There are seven policies contained within it focused on: (Policy 1) development affecting property included in the Penwortham [Heritage] List; (2) requirements for new large scale residential development; (3) types of residential property; (4) Middleforth Shopping Centre; (5) new

sporting facilities, (6) Penwortham Community Centre and (7) Penwortham Cycling and Walking Route. There are no site allocations within the Penwortham NP.

Given the age of the Penwortham NP, most of the policies have now been outdated by national policy (e.g. Policy 4 is superseded by changes to use classes and permitted development) or by local policy (e.g. Policy 7 is effectively superseded by the Central Lancashire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) ([IT03](#))). Penwortham Town Council have confirmed their intent to update the Penwortham NP over the next 1-2 years and met with SRBC Officers, in summer 2025, to discuss requirements. SRBC's advice was for the town council to consider their NP update against the policies of the (emerging) CLLP and for the NP to focus its strength on local design and heritage, which can then add local detail to support CLLP policies (EN13). Penwortham Town Council have confirmed they do not intend to make any site allocations through the updated NP. Therefore, the Penwortham NP has been considered in the making of the CLLP, but the age of the NP and the confirmed commitments of the town council to update the NP, mean that it is now more appropriate for the updated NP to align itself with the CLLP.

South Ribble also has one designated neighbourhood area, in Samlesbury and Cuerdale, that did not progress to a NP. In 2013, Samlesbury and Cuerdale Parish Council applied for the designation of a neighbourhood area boundary with a view to developing a neighbourhood development plan. The boundary was approved following public consultation, but the Parish Council later decided not to pursue the development of a NP. Based on the abandonment of the NP, the Council has not considered the Samlesbury designated neighbourhood area through the CLLP. There are no other NPs emerging in South Ribble.

The CLAs have set out in their response to Initial Questions ([CLA03](#)) why it has not been considered necessary to set out housing figures for Neighbourhood areas, with reference to paragraph 69 and 70 of the NPPF (2024).

Paragraph 1.4 of the CLLP confirms that the Local Plan will be used to assess and determine planning applications alongside any relevant policies contained within made Neighbourhood Plans.